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BERTHA’S BLOOD

KIRSTIE CLOSE

There were two cornerstones in Bertha’s life; cricket and dead rabbits. I find both repugnant, but I have had to explore both to better understand the woman who was my great-grandmother.

Through writing about Bertha I attempt to illustrate the experiences of women around the year 1908. This was the year that women were awarded the right to vote in Victoria. Bertha was not active in campaigns for or against the women’s suffrage movement. In fact, it is not known whether she even voted in the next state election, held in 1911. However as we are exploring the broad topic of “women in 1908”, women like Bertha are important to reflect upon. She was busy getting on with life at the time of the 1908 decision. Her existence did not start or cease in that year because of a parliamentary decision. That does not mean that she did not benefit from women’s ability to vote. She stands, however, as a contrast to many of the other women that you will find in this book.

Bertha’s son Norman (affectionately known as Norm), who became my grandfather, was never comfortable speaking about her. Newspaper articles, too, that could have offered insight into her life did not offer more than scant details. Thus I have had to read between the lines more often than not. It is in these silences that I have found glimpses of her. These silences also reflect the sentiment that women during this period should remain in the private sphere, rather than encroach upon the public domain.

So without further ado, please let me introduce you to Bertha Henrietta Churcher.

OUT OF THE OLD AND INTO THE NEW

Bertha immigrated to Australia from England at the age of four. Prior to that, her family resided in the district of Portsmouth, Hampshire. Bertha’s grandfather was recorded in an 1850 census as being a practising lawyer. By 1861, he had become a mason, a profession that he was to pass on to his eldest son Walter.
Walter had finished his apprenticeship in stone masonry when he married Jane Nichols in 1874. They were both near the age of thirty. Their children, Bertha Henrietta and Annie Louisa arrived in quick succession; Bertha in 1878 and Annie in 1880. The family went willingly to the colony of Victoria, their passage paid from their own pockets. Government-assisted immigration had ceased by the time the Churchers decided to relocate in 1882. The Churchers were thus determined and had some money to their name. The upfront minimum payment of £15 for steerage allowed their passage. They sailed in the ship Sorata, which arrived in Melbourne in August of 1882.

There were no Churchers in Victoria to greet them, but Jane’s family (the Nichols) possibly helped them settle in Melbourne as there were bountiful numbers of Nichols in the colony at the time. They established themselves on Queensberry Street, North Melbourne.

After a few years of life on Queensberry Street, Jane became ill. She had contracted pulmonary phthisis, more commonly known as tuberculosis. Symptoms of tuberculosis include loss of weight and energy, a progressive cough that may bring up blood and a high fever—a nasty affliction. The money that the Churchers had set aside to purchase property in the bustling city went directly to Jane’s medicinal needs. The family’s outlook grew more ominous as weeks passed.

The Churchers came to rely upon those around them in the Hotham community and there were many associations from which to obtain assistance. There was no government welfare at this time so churches, benevolent and friendly societies were vital. Walter would not have been able to afford to stay home with Jane, and thus worked from six a.m. until four p.m. which were the hours kept by the city’s stone masons. With the girls so young, they may have been left in the care of others so that Walter could work and they would not be infected by their mother.

Jane passed away on 27 July 1886, four years after they had arrived in the colony. The small family watched her go into the ground at Melbourne’s General Cemetery. Losing her so soon after
arriving in Melbourne must have been incredibly difficult for Walter; they had been married for twelve years. Walter, Bertha and Annie continued to rely on those around them.

It was while living with her father in North Melbourne that Bertha was introduced to the game of cricket. As a treat for the girls, he would take them down to the local cricket ground to watch the local team. The cricket pitch was on Macaulay Road and Dryburgh Street, a few blocks from Queensberry Street. This was a place where the community gathered and gossiped, and more importantly, connected.

It took two years to find a new mother for the girls. Her name was Martha Vautier and she too had lost her partner a few years prior. She resided a few streets away from the Churchers on Little Howard Street, North Melbourne. Walter moved into her home with the girls after their marriage on 4 June 1888. By this time Walter was working in Williamstown as a carpenter on a temporary job, his main residence remained North Melbourne. Securing Martha had ensured a place for the girls to go during the day while he was at work. Or so he thought.

Neither hide nor hair can be recovered regarding Walter’s demise. We can only assume that he passed away, as there is no death record for him in Victoria. Martha remarried, to Mr John Voake, only seven months after her union with Walter, on 4 January 1889. Therefore, sometime in late 1888 Walter must have left his girls in some way, shape or form. There was a rumour in the family that Jane and Walter had abandoned Bertha and Annie and returned to England. At least we know that is not true of Jane. The absence of Walter’s death record is a concern; perhaps there was some truth to the myth. The outgoing passenger lists from that period were unobtainable at the time of this research so this is a stone that will be left unturned for the moment.

Whatever happened, Martha did not wish to continue caring for the girls, as she already had three mouths to feed. It was not because she too had passed away, because she did not do so until 1922. Despite this, Bertha and Annie were not listed on the Children’s Register that recorded the names of “neglected children”. "Neglected children" were classified as those:
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—found begging or receiving alms,
—wandering about or sleeping in streets, taverns, or public places, and children who were not cared for or accommodated in any way,
—living in brothels,
—having committed an offence punishable by imprisonment,
—children whose parents are unable to control them and wished them to be sent to the industrial school, giving security to the Justices for payment of maintenances. 20

The latter would have been a ways of putting the girls “up for adoption.”

It is comforting to know that Bertha and Annie were not counted among many other children who were forced to live like tramps. Due to their absence on the “neglected children’s register”, we can assume that an arrangement was made to send the girls to foster families through ready-made contacts. Bertha went into the care of the Pritchard family, and Annie to Mrs Charlotte Simcock. Both families were in Richmond, so the girls still saw each other frequently, living only a few streets apart. Not only that, but the Pritchard and Simcock families were related, so contact between both families was established.

Bertha’s new home with the Pritchard’s was on Cubitt Street, Richmond. It was a crowded abode, with not only Bertha and her foster parents, but also the Pritchard children including William and Olive. 21 A tantalising description of the street exists. A Richmond resident described Cubitt Street as ‘full of horse manure, waste papers, empty tins, rabbit entrails, dead cats and such like flotsam and jetsam, whilst the channels contained a quality of malodorous slush.’22 As I mentioned, rabbits were a cornerstone in Bertha’s life. Rabbits had been introduced to the colony decades before and their population had flourished along with hares. In the city and the country they were a source of income. 23

Having said that Bertha was indifferent to women’s suffrage, she was still aware of it. The Churcher girls’ first documented contact with the women’s suffrage movement was in 1891. In that year, women organised a petition to take to parliament to use as leverage when demanding women’s suffrage. The petition came to be known as the ‘Monster Petition’. To obtain the signatures, the suffragists
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door-knocked houses all over the state and asked the women of the house to sign the document. 24 Annie signed the petition at the tender age of eleven. 25 She may have appeared older to the suffragist who knocked on her door due to the conditions in which she lived. Many children her age were acting as the family’s breadwinners, and working in cigar or rope making factories for example. 26 It would not be a stretch to suggest that Annie was working as hard as any grown woman at that time. She would have been quite a mature eleven years. Bertha’s name is not on the 1891 ‘Monster Petition’, but no doubt she heard all about it from Annie.

When she signed the petition, Annie gave her address as 102 Cambridge Street, Collingwood. Collingwood was a slum area, just as parts of Richmond were less-than-desirable in the late 1800s. This was due mostly to the industrialisation of the area with tanneries and
factories. The Goldstein family, heavily involved in charity, frequented the slums of Collingwood and attempted to assist those in need. A journalist who accompanied them on one trip later told of ‘one woman, whose clothes were only rags, balancing herself on a rickety chair in a tiny room with a floor strewn with dead rabbits. She was skinning one on her knees. These skins would be used in the making of bell toppers—men’s high silk hats. One hopes that Annie was never in this predicament, and judging by the photos that exist of her and her older sister, she had a bit more than rags to wear. Bertha and Annie possibly passed women like this on a daily basis, perhaps going to and from work.

**TURN OF THE CENTURY**

Family memory declares that Bertha worked as a domestic servant at Rupertswood mansion. Domestic servants were usually drawn from the most destitute class of society during this time. Bertha was young and destitute, although being fortunate for an orphan. She fit the mould perfectly. Rupertswood mansion was 33 kilometers out of Melbourne, in Sunbury. After watching all those local cricket games with her father, Bertha would have been excited to be working at the birthplace of the Ashes Cricket competition. As of 1888, Rupertswood became a holiday house for the Clarke family; their permanent residence had shifted to a house in inner-city Melbourne. Bertha probably worked at Rupertswood over summer and whenever the Clarkes planned on returning for a weekend retreat. A girl could not have asked for a more pleasant opportunity in the field of domestic service, as Rupertswood had been the meeting place of Victoria’s socialites for decades. It would have been a beautiful and exciting place but most likely a tiresome lot of work.

For the rest of the year, she was employed for domestic duties by Rev. Charles Edward Gayer and his wife. Perhaps Bertha was poached by the Gayers after hearing she would be out of work at one summer’s end. It became an arrangement for at least three years. Rev. Gayer was the vicar at St. Mary’s Church of England in Sunbury. The Clarke family had long attended St. Mary’s for their Sunday services, making their way from the mansion to the church on foot. Bertha
may have been invited to lunches at Rupertswood with Rev. Gayer and his wife, as the Clarke family traditionally invited their minister to eat with them after Sunday services. She would obviously have remained in the servant’s quarters during these visits if she attended, however a visit to Rupertswood is a visit to Rupertswood.  

It was during her time in Sunbury that the woman’s suffrage movement again touched the Churcser’s lives. In 1903 the ‘franchise was won federally’ for women. It was not compulsory to vote, yet Bertha and Annie decided to take on the challenge and make a difference in the nation that had become home. Annie voted in Tallygaroopna. Tallygaroopna was home to most of Mrs Simcock’s family, a small country town north of Shepparton. It is interesting to ponder what brought Bertha to the polls. Perhaps the sisters had corresponded regarding the election, and encouraged each other to vote. Seeing as Annie had put her signature on the 1891 ‘Monster Petition’, she may have coaxed Bertha to try and “catch up.” Rather than making a statement with her vote, Bertha may have put in a ballot out of boredom. Rev. Gayer was away for a number of weeks in Portsea to recover from illness. Alternatively, if she had been working at Rupertswood in the lead up to Christmas, Lady Clarke would have disapproved of her voting; she was involved in the National Council of Women of Victoria, but her activism for women’s rights did not extend to campaigns for suffrage.

There was enough to distract the Clarkes at this time though, it seems. Rupert Clarke, the son of Janet, sounded a tad grumpy. He had put a notice in the Sunbury News that stated:

Owing to the Destruction done lately and the Pilfering of Plants and Flowers, I have decided to CLOSE the Rupertswood Grounds in all Parts from the General Public. 
Trespassers will be prosecuted.
Rupert Clarke

Regardless of these possibilities, we do know for certain what Bertha’s actions must have been on the day of voting. The instructions for voters were as follows, ‘A cross (x) is made in the square opposite of the candidate for whom the elector wishes to vote.’ With her vote, Bertha contributed to the progress of the
nation, and she benefited from the women’s suffrage movement, whether she knew it or not.

MARRIAGE TO A SHARP SHOOTER

Annie was in Tallygaroopna at the time of the 1903 Federal election. I assume that by that time she had met the Close brothers, Albert and George. She may even have already introduced George to Bertha. A trip to the city to visit Bertha when she was with the Pritchards would have been most appealing to George, a boy of the country. The city dazzled many young fellows who travelled into its depths. George was handsome in his younger years, certainly. Sadly for Bertha (and wary members of his gene pool) his attractive looks were to leave him. Other factors more in his favour were that he was broadly read and a member of the Tallygaroopna Oddfellows, a friendly society that ensured his good standing within the community and guaranteed him assistance if his family was to hit hard times.

Bertha married George Close Jnr, on 27 June 1906 at St. Stephens Church in Richmond. Rev. Gayer from Sunbury married them, kindly traveling from Sunbury that day with many other friends who attended the ceremony. On this day, Bertha wore ‘a dress of cream silk with Valenciennes lace, and wore a wreath of orange blossoms and veil, and carried a bouquet of white carnations, a gift of the bridegroom.’ George was fortunate to be marrying a very practical woman, who had had to find ways to survive through the most difficult of circumstances.

The couple had one head start. A property of 220 acres was a gift from George’s parents, George Snr and Eliza Close. They settled there directly after their wedding. Bertha was once again close to Annie.
At the wedding reception, Rev. Gayer proposed a toast to Bertha, referring in ‘felicitous terms to the worth character of the bride of whom he had had personal knowledge for a considerable time.’ For him to travel so far with so many others from Sunbury for her wedding is testament to Bertha’s lovable demeanour.

Albert was the first of their six children to arrive, and he did so on 3 June 1907. That was nearly exactly a year after George and Bertha’s wedding. No illegitimate children for this pair! However, Bertha was so ill after his birth that her in-laws, George Snr and Eliza Close, took responsibility for his upbringing. This is the first sign we have that Bertha was not a well woman. She developed pernicious anaemia, which resulted in several trips to Melbourne over subsequent years. Whether or not her children knew of her disease is another issue.

Slotted in between births and marriages came the election of April 1911, the first state election in which women could vote. The suffrage had been won for Victorian ladies. Bertha was three
months pregnant at the time, so whether or not she managed to get to
the polls is debatable. Annie would have been at the polls with bells on.

Bertha was probably the type of woman who would have
frustrated suffragist Vida Goldstein to no end because of her lack of
knowledge or care for politics.\textsuperscript{48} Vida Goldstein, a member of the
family who toured the slums, was another of my ancestors on my
mother’s side, a miraculous, courageous and clever woman who ran
for a parliamentary seat in 1911; the year that she and Bertha were
first eligible to vote in the state election. Her life revolved around the
decision of 1908 far more than Bertha’s. Bertha was the sort of
woman ‘whose interests did not extend past the garden gate.’\textsuperscript{49}

Bertha’s first set of twins, Leslie (Les) and Harold Ernest, were
born on 11 May 1909. Bertha was so frail that Eliza took Albert off
her hands and raised him herself. Harold died on May 14. The ordeal
must have been exhausting and distressing for Bertha.

In 1909, Tallygaroopna was ‘roused... to the highest point of
excitement and expectancy’ for Annie’s wedding.\textsuperscript{50} There are
detailed descriptions of the event in the \textit{Shepparton News} as there
was for Bertha and George’s wedding, but only a fleeting reference to
Bertha, despite her having a heavy hand in the day’s proceedings.
Here we must interpret the silences in the document to uncover
details about Bertha:

At the conclusion of the service, a very great number of relatives and
friends assembled at the residence of Mr Geo. Close Junr.,\textit{[sic]}, where a
sumptuous wedding dejeuner was provided. A glimpse at the great
room, with its spotless white walls relieved by double horseshoe
emblems and wreath, made one certain that no trouble had been spared
in making the place suitable for such a festive occasion. From the
ceiling depended foliage in all directions, from which wedding bells
were swung. The tables were simply straining under the great weight
of edibles suited to all tastes, even the most epicurean. About fifty
guests sat down to the breakfast, showing their appreciation of the host
and hostess’ kindness by the hearty way in which the tables were
lightened.\textsuperscript{51}

The wedding occurred one month after Bertha had given birth to
Leslie and Harold, and she could not pause to mourn her son too long
if she was to prepare for such a gathering. Perhaps Bertha had thrown herself into the project so that she had not had to dwell on her loss. Either way, we can identify the effort she went to for her sister’s special day. No one could doubt the terrific effort it must have been for Bertha to coordinate the event whether or not she received assistance from George or others. She must have had assistance to hang the foliage and set up the horseshoe emblem. I have a sneaking suspicion that these were of Bertha’s design.

Bertha’s Family. From left, Norman, Bertha, Ivy, George and Elsie Close

Bertha had a second set of twins, Norman and Elsie on 18 January 1913. Norman was my grandfather. The four-year break between births would have raised eyebrows. Around this time, debates about contraception and other devices to give women more power in the “bedroom” were heated. There was a lot of pressure on couples to “populate or perish”. Bertha must either have used a fail-proof oral contraceptive, abstinence, or had many miscarriages.

Bertha strengthened physically and in determination as Les and the twins remained with Bertha and George. Albert, who was broaching seven years of age when Norm and Elsie arrived, remained with Eliza and George Snr. Ivy was the last to arrive on 12 January
1915, and she was the treasured baby of the family. She too remained with Bertha and George.

Bertha made frequent trips down to see the Pritchard family while receiving treatment for anaemia. The Pritchard family became recognised as the grandparents of Bertha’s children. She had also taken on their name before she was married, so they obviously meant a great deal to her and she found comfort in their company.

**FAMILY MEMORIES**

The Closes’ donated some of their plot of land in Tallygaroopna to the construction of a Methodist church around 1883, and the church picnics each Sunday were famous in the district, bringing many families together. Sunday was Norm’s favourite day as a result. Women such as Bertha were pivotal in such communal events, promoting support between the families and a more intimate relationship between the farming communities. Food was always a draw card, and if Country Women’s Association spreads of today are anything to go by, the women who preceded them and taught them their tricks would have had everyone exclaiming with delight at their creations. I have no doubt after reading the article on Annie’s wedding that Bertha could work miracles with a wood fire oven. Norm would sit down with a heaped plate of food and scrape the plate until not a trace remained.

Married life with George was never dull. He was heavily involved in one pastime in particular; rabbit hunting. Rabbits and hares made challenging targets. His shooting prowess was on full display during the annual Tallygaroopna “hare hunting” days. These events doubled as a fundraiser for community hospitals or schools, because the skins would be sold at the end of the day. The 1929 shoot, for example, raised funds for a local school. The best price for hares that year was 300 pairs at 3/- a pair. George was a pretty decent shot. Bertha would no doubt watch her husband clump down the dirt track early that morning, lunch in hand, rifle slung over his shoulder. Returning late that night she would have been grateful that the hares were already heading for Melbourne on the train. ‘The hares were hung in twos across a thick rod—they were not skinned or cleaned but were
kept in cool stores from where they were exported to England. They were still hung till "ripe", and on arrival in England were skinned and cleaned, then soaked in wine before being finally prepared and served as "Jugged Hare" in some expensive restaurant in Britain. All that had remained for Bertha to deal with was the story of the chase, and his bloodstained clothes.

The whole family was involved somehow in these hunts. Ferrets were a useful implement for hare hunting. George employed the help of his children in rearing ferrets for those hare shoots. Norm cared very much for the ferrets, and was held responsible for their wellbeing.

BAD BLOOD

In time, Bertha lost her teeth. And as her children grew, so did she. Her legs bulged out over boots that were too small for her. She must have had enormous blisters that never had a chance to heal. She developed pernicious anaemia when the children were still very young. This may explain why Albert was taken in by George Snr and Eliza. It was fortunate that George had joined the Oddfellows in 1900, six years before their marriage. The Oddfellows were a friendly society that supported those in financial need or ill health until they got back on their feet. They also provided financial aid when a member of their fraternity passed away, or lost a family member, by assisting with the funeral costs. Acceptance into the Tallygaroopna Oddfellow Lodge would have been fairly easy at the age of 19; had he waited until 1906 or later and had an already sickly wife, he would have been refused membership.

The township was aware that Bertha was ill. She made one final trip to see the Pritchards in February 1931. Her friends entered an article in the Shepparton Newspaper:

Mrs George Close of Tallygaroopna who has been in ill health for some time, is now spending a holiday with her relatives at the seaside. Her many friends hope the change will benefit her considerably.
Unfortunately their well wishes could not stall the inevitable. Bertha passed away while staying with the Pritchards on 13 February 1931. The causes listed include the pernicious anaemia and exhaustion. George decided to announce Bertha’s death to the children over breakfast, while he read the newspaper.

Norm was not expecting this news. Some of his shock could be attributable to men being clueless regarding women’s health, or even their own. Caring for others was the women’s domain; men knew nothing of it. Norm always said that he had not even known that his mother was ill. Or perhaps her trips down to the Pritchards were so frequent that the children thought nothing of it.

Her body was brought up from Melbourne by the Messrs’ Kittle Bros’ motor hearse to Wungnhu. Bertha’s life was commemorated by
the community with a large service at the church and then her graveside, ‘showing the deep respect in which the deceased was held.’ The article in the Shepparton News went on to say that ‘the late Mrs Close was a lady of outstanding integrity and strength of character.’

Norm and his brothers were due to play cricket that day, but in honour of Bertha, the game was called off. The game of cricket touched Bertha even in death.

ELLA’S ARRIVAL

My grandmother, Ella, has been a wealth of information regarding Norm’s parents. Norm and Ella lived with George approximately fifteen years after Bertha passed away, when they were married. In addition to the ferrets, George had accumulated a few roosters to show at the local fair. Many an attack was launched against the roosters who decided to nip the family’s respective derrières when the time came to visit the backyard toilet, which was a simple hole in the ground. Ella remembers beating one of George’s roosters off with a stick, then giving it a good kick. To her horror, she was to find it still running around merrily after she thought she had so sufficiently put it in its place.

The family was lucky if they bathed. When Ella had to live with George in the 1940s, he had been wearing the same flannel shirt for twelve months. When she finally convinced him to peel it off to wash, she swears black and blue that it stood up on its own. All the chores that Bertha had ensured were completed had been neglected or entirely ignored since her passing. The wood burning stove that had been the “powerhouse” of the home stood cold and black. Clothes were left unwashed. Bertha had been a spectacular producer of jams, soaps, candles, clothes and bread; these were now purchased or donated by other locals that saw that the family was struggling to maintain the farm. George, or one of the children, had attempted to make something in the wood fire oven but in the process had burnt out the back of it.

It is clear that after Bertha passed away, George did not know what to do with himself or his household. He lost the farm. By the
time my father was born in 1952, he was living in a far less pleasant abode in Shepparton. He borrowed money from his children in order to “remain afloat.”

CONCLUSION

Bertha has touched each of her descendants in different ways. It was in the way that George’s life fell to disarray after Bertha’s death. It is in the words my grandfather was unable to say; he was never able to talk about his mother with us, not even with his wife. It was in the way her daughters wore her gold locket on their wedding days.

The rabbits that were such a presence in my great-grandmother’s life still run over her grave today at the overgrown, unkempt Wungnahu cemetery. Norman and Ella took us out there before Norm passed away in 2000.

Norman could not, for whatever reason, tell us anything about Bertha. On his deathbed he told me not to pursue history because nobody cared. I defied him, and I am glad. I think his mother had a story worth telling. Women of her time endured so much, and received little recognition. I also hope that I have impressed upon the reader how important it is to memorialise women from all walks of life. Bertha may have made minimal impact on public life in Australia, but she and hundreds like her have raised decent people who make our nation today.

I would like to thank my grandmother, Ella Close, and our friend and relation Mrs Betty Foster. They have both been immensely helpful in my quest to uncover information about the Close family.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 98.
14 I scoured both the Births, Deaths and Marriages Register for Victoria and New South Wales online and also the death register on Microfiche at the State Library for Victoria.
19 Neglected Children's Register, Public Record Office of Victoria.
26 Blaincy, Our Side of the Country, 105.
27 McCalman, Struggletown, 12.
28 Bomford, That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman, 15.
29 B. W. Higman, Domestic Service in Australia (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 68.
31 Ibid., 51.
32 Ibid., 16.
34 Bomford, That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman., 50
35 1903 Federal Election Electoral Roll, accessed at State Library of Victoria, Genealogy Room
37 Sunbury News, 5 December 1903
38 See http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE1134b.htm, last accessed 07 May 2007
39 Sunbury News, 28 Nov 1903, original emphases
40 Sunbury News, 5 December 1903
41 Blainey, Our Side of the Country., 75
42 Blainey, Oddfellows., 61
43 The Shepparton News, July 17, 1906
44 Ibid.
45 Shepparton News, Tuesday July 17, 1906
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46 Irma Close, Pers. Comm., written memories from Betty Foster’s personal archives.
47 Bomford, That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman, 51
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 69
50 Chenhall-Churcher Wedding, Numurkah Leader, 15 June 1909
51 Ibid.
53 Pers. Comm., Irma Close, written memories care of Betty Foster
54 Mrs Pritchard is referred to as Ivy’s grandmother in a newspaper article about her wedding. Shepparton News
55 Foster Torney, Betts, ed., Early Families of Shepparton and District (Numurkah: Numurkah Leader), 31
56 Norman Close, memoirs written circa. 1999. These are in the author’s possession.
57 We always joked that he would scrape the paintwork off a bowl one day. He loved his puddings.
58 Pers. Comm. Ella Close
60 Clarke, Clarke of Rupertswood., 316.
63 See Image of George’s Certificate, c/o Betty Foster’s personal archives.
64 Blainey, Oddfellows., 2-3
65 Ibid., 61-2
66 Bertha Henrietta Churcher, Death Certificate, accessed from Birth Death and Marriages Register of Victoria
68 Oldfield, Woman Suffrage., 196
69 ‘Obituary Mrs George Close Jnr.’, Shepparton News, Monday February 16, 1931
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
73 Blainey, Our Side of the Country., 103
74 Ibid.
76 Numurkah Leader, Tuesday 28 Sept 1943

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